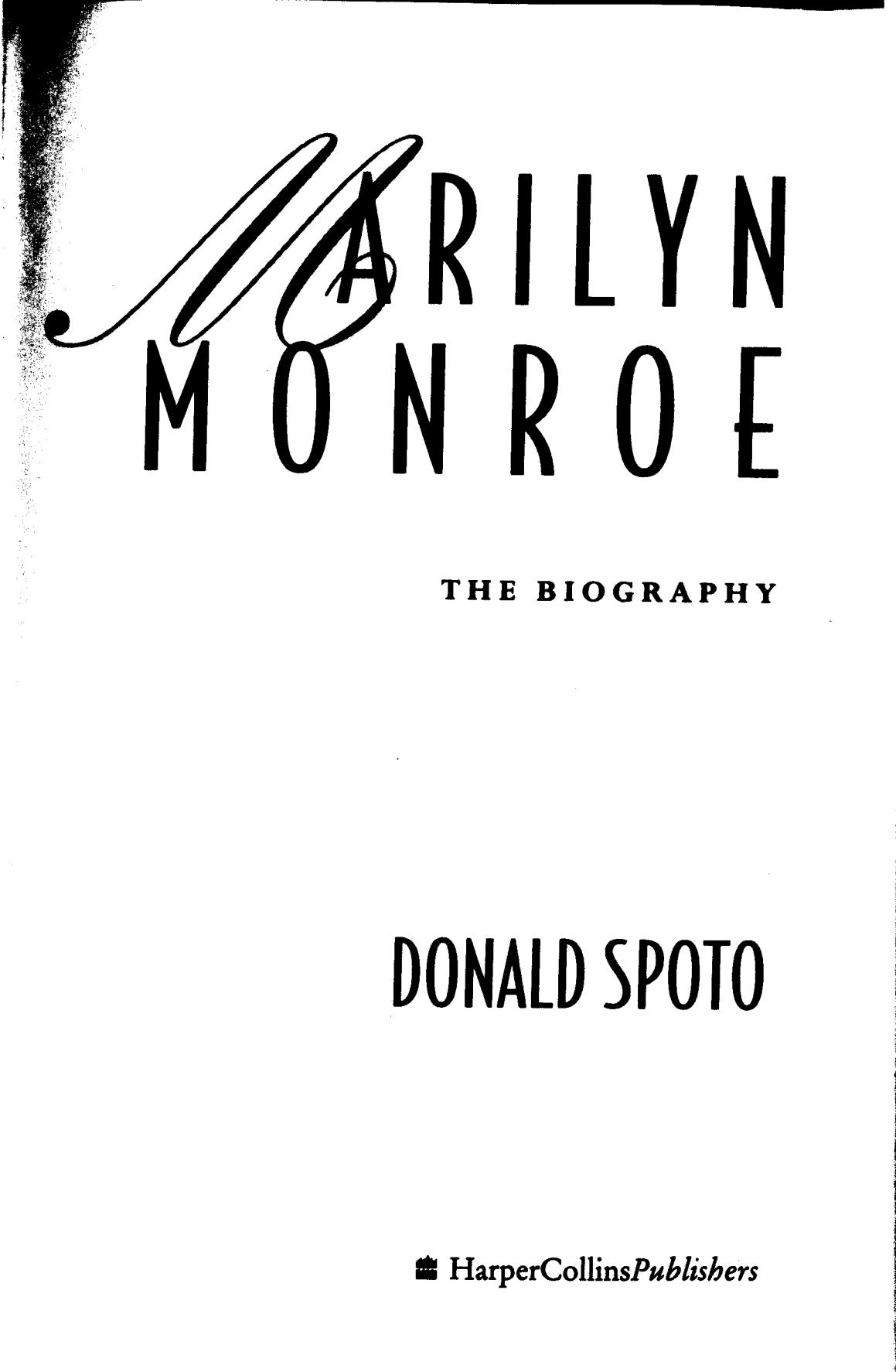


EXHIBIT

11



MARILYN MONROE

THE BIOGRAPHY

DONALD SPOTO

 HarperCollinsPublishers

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86 ~ MARILYN MONROE

tion. With no rear door for a lover's swift escape, he thought he had caught her in a compromising situation, all his worst fears finally confirmed, his jealousy justified.

Almost crazed with rage, he shouted again—and then his wife opened to admit him, a wide grin on her face. She was alone, wrapped in a bath towel because he had interrupted her shower. His unwarranted anger had demonstrated that he could be unreasonably, childishly suspicious—that Dougherty did not trust his wife. And it was trust that she required more than anything to guide her securely through the shoals of young adulthood. Her retaliatory joke may also have unwittingly revealed more serious feelings: it is not hard to imagine that she would indeed have wished to be with another man, even if "Bill" and "Tommy" were only momentary fantasies.

But in a way Dougherty was right when he said that his wife was dependent on him; whatever her inchoate longings, she had no one else on whom to rely, and she was miserable when, in spring 1944, he was sent to the Pacific and Southeast Asian war zones. "She begged me not to go," he recalled,

and when I said I had no choice, she begged to have a baby—a child would be her way of having me with her. But I knew that a baby would be very hard for her, and not only financially. She really wasn't up to being a mother. I said we would have children later, after the war.

Whatever her mixed feelings about him and their marriage, Dougherty's departure revived the old feelings of abandonment. "She wanted something, *someone* she could hold onto all the time," Dougherty remembered—as he did her tears and anguish the day he left.

Now the wife of a soldier overseas, Norma Jeane went to live with her mother-in-law at 5254 Hermitage Street, North Hollywood. Ethel Dougherty worked in nearby Burbank, as a nurse at the Radioplane Company, a plant owned by the English actor Reginald Denny, who developed the first successful radio-controlled, pilotless aircraft for target training and antiaircraft. By April 1944, Ethel had found a job there for Norma Jeane, too—the unpleasant task of spraying a foul-smelling varnish on fuselage fabric (working in the "dope room," as it

JUNE 1942 - NOVEMBER 1945 ~ 87

[redacted]
as called), but it provided a steady income. With major footholds in both aircraft and defense industries, the Southern California economy was booming during the war; there were, therefore, jobs for thousands of women.

Life with her mother-in-law was reasonably comfortable and undemanding, but Norma Jeane longed for the companionship of her husband. Paradoxically, it must be admitted that she may have missed him because he was not always the most attentive and sensitive companion. Norma Jeane, in other words, was one of many who often continually seek a neglectful or even unwittingly hurtful mate, in an effort to find the earlier situation of rejection and to correct it by reversal. It was a pattern that would deepen and be repeated in the years to come.

Norma Jeane wrote to Grace in West Virginia (on June 15, 1944), describing her life that season. Except for a few minor textual mistakes, her letter is remarkably expressive and succinct. Later, she allowed that she had sweetened the account of her marriage out of loyalty to her husband and a deeply rooted desire to please Grace Goddard:

. . . Jimmie has been gone for seven weeks and the first word I received from him was the day before my birthday. He sent a cable night letter by Western Union saying, "Darling, on your birthday I send you a whole world of love." I was simply thrilled to death to hear from him.

I have never really written and told you of our married life together. Of course I know that if it hadn't been for you we might not have never been married and I know I owe you a lot for that fact alone, *besides* countless others. . . . I love Jimmie in a different way I suppose than anyone, and I know I shall never be happy with anyone else as long as I live, and I know he feels the same towards me. So you see we are really very happy together, that is of course, when we can be together. We both miss each other terribly. We shall be married two years June 19th. And we really have had quite a happy life together.

I am working 10 hrs. a day at Radioplane Co., at Metropolitan [later Burbank] Airport. I am saving almost

~ MARILYN MONROE

everything I earn (to help pay for our future home after the war). The work isn't easy at all for I am on my feet all day and walking quite a bit.

I was all set to get a Civil Service Job with the army, all my papers filled out and everything set to go, and then I found out I would be working with ALL army fellows. I was over there one day, there are just too many wolves to be working with, there are enough of those at Radioplane Co. without a whole army full of them. The Personnel Officer said that he would hire me but that he wouldn't advise it for my own sake, so I am back at Radioplane Co. and pretty content. . . .²

With much love,

Norma Jeane

During a summer holiday in 1944, Norma Jeane (then eighteen) took her first journey out of California, visiting Grace at her temporary job at a Chicago film lab. Grace's departure from West Virginia had been necessary, according to Bebe, because although Grace was working regularly, "she had developed a drinking problem, [which was] not surprising. All my father's wives had that, probably because one of his own chief occupations was whooping it up every day, and they joined him."

Norma Jeane also visited Bebe in West Virginia, and then she proceeded to Tennessee for a brief stay with her half-sister, Berniece Baker, now married and a mother. Of this last sojourn nothing is known: the daughters of Gladys scarcely knew each other, and although they had hoped to become friends, their desires were inhibited by long absences; reunions were invariably somewhat awkward, despite mutual goodwill.

Returning to California, Norma Jeane resumed her work at Radioplane, where her new assignment was inspecting and folding parachutes, which she found not much more interesting than spraying glue. Her salary was still the national minimum wage: she was paid twenty

2. Norma Jeane was in fact rated as "above average" by her supervisors at Radioplane.

JUNE 1942 - NOVEMBER 1945 ~ 89

dollars a week for sixty hours of work. Belatedly, Norma Jeane wrote to thank Grace for the gift of a new dress and for her hospitality during the Chicago visit; the letter, dated December 3, 1944, and posted just before Dougherty was due home for Christmas leave, included an important reference to the fact that Norma Jeane was sending Grace money from her paycheck:

I certainly hope Jimmie will be home for Christmas, it just won't seem right without him. I love him so very much, honestly I don't think there is another man alive like him. He really is awfully sweet.

I shall send you more money a little later.

I can't ever tell you how much the trip did for me, I shall be grateful to you Grace *forever*. I love you and Daddy [i.e., Doc Goddard] so much. I sure miss you Grace.

With love,

Norma Jeane

P.S. Tell everyone at the studio "hello."

Dougherty's time at home during the Christmas-New Year holiday of 1944/45 was a happy break from her routine. Norma Jeane continued to cling to him, and as the time drew near for him to leave, an odd thing occurred.

According to Dougherty, Norma Jeane suddenly announced that she was going to telephone her father, a man she had neither met nor ever contacted. She placed a call, announcing her name and the fact that she was Gladys's daughter. But very quickly she replaced the receiver and told Jim that the man had simply hung up on her. Was he Norma Jeane's father? Had she reached the right man?

For years, the call was believed by everyone to have happened just as she described it. But even if one is quick to believe the appalling, heartless apathy of a man for his daughter, there are several problems. First, she admitted it was not a Mr. Mortensen she called, but she never told Jim the man's name or where he lived. Second, there is no evidence that Gladys (if she knew) ever discussed her daughter's paternity, and Grace never openly speculated. Third, Dougherty never

90 ~ MARILYN MONROE

heard the man's voice, nor did Norma Jeane provide details of the call's destination. In every respect, the episode was repeated identically at least twice in the ensuing seven years: each time Norma Jeane attempted to contact her father, the gesture was made in the presence of someone on whose sympathy and support she greatly relied: in this case, she asked Dougherty to hold her in his arms for several hours.

There is the strong possibility that this was one of Norma Jeane's "pretend games" to evoke pity and to elicit comfort. Just as later, so now: whenever she feared being abandoned, she presented herself as a lost, rejected child. In fact, she was misbegotten, at a time when society still imputed to this status a considerable stigma. To the end of her life, even after she had long admitted the bastardy, she bore her illegitimacy with dignified humiliation. In the final analysis, it matters not whether she ever made honest attempts to contact a man she said was her father; indeed, this may have been one of her most convincing performances. But it is significant that at certain moments when she was frightened of being abandoned, she "called her father." Bona fide or not, the moment had its effect: she needed to remind others of a primary childhood loss, of a frightful void in her life, a desertion that had left her forever wounded. "Comfort me," her actions said.

"In her rational mind," as Dougherty said, "she knew I had to go back to overseas duty . . . but she considered my shipping out as another rejection." Her feelings of loneliness and dismay did not endure, however, and not long after his departure for the Pacific again in January 1945, Norma Jeane quit Radioplane. She had seen the possibility of a very different life.

The previous autumn, after returning from her cross-country journey, she was on the job inspecting parachutes when a crew of photographers from the army's First Motion Picture Unit arrived at the factory. Their task was to photograph women on the assembly line, contributing to the war effort in various strategic capacities. But these were to be no typical documentary shots of weary girls in overalls. The "shutter-bugs," as the photographers were called, were to return with snapshots for commercial as well as military magazines: good prints and some silent movie shots of the most attractive ladies, carefully posing to show that the country's loveliest were busy patriots.

Among the camera crewmen was twenty-five-year-old David

JUNE 1942 - NOVEMBER 1945 ~ 91

Conover, whose first meeting with Norma Jeane, late in 1944, was described in her letter to Grace dated June 4, 1945.³

. . . The first thing I knew [the photographers] had me out there, taking pictures of me. . . . They all asked where in the H——— I had been hiding. . . . They took a lot of moving pictures of me, and some of them asked for dates, etc. (*Naturally I refused!*) . . . After they finished with some of the pictures, an army corporal by the name of David Conover told me he would be interested in getting some color still shots of me. He used to have a studio on "the Strip" on Sunset [Boulevard]. He said he would make arrangements with the plant superintendent if I would agree, so I said okay. He told me what to wear and what shade of lipstick, etc., so the next couple of weeks I posed for him at different times. . . . He said all the pictures came out perfect. Also, he said that I should by all means go into the modeling profession . . . that I photographed very well and that he wants to take a lot more. Also he said he had a lot of contacts he wanted me to look into.

I told him I would rather not work when Jimmie was here, so he said he would wait, so I'm expecting to hear from him most any time again.

He is awfully nice and is married and is *strictly business*, which is the way I like it. Jimmie seems to like the idea of me modeling, so I'm glad about that.

By the spring of 1945, Norma Jeane was quickly becoming known as a photographer's dream. Cooperative, eager and good-humored, she tossed her curly, chestnut-colored hair, flashed her blue-green eyes, smiled brightly and gazed unblinkingly at the camera, holding

3. Conover (who was dispatched to his task by his superior officer, Ronald Reagan) wrongly stated in his memoir *Finding Marilyn* that they were first introduced on June 26, 1945; in fact there had been at least a dozen meetings during the seven months before then, as Norma Jeane's letters to Grace reveal. Alas, *Finding Marilyn* abounds with inaccuracies, unconscionable reams of fabricated dialogue and imaginatively concocted events. Conover (1919–1983) was a talented photographer but a patent fabulist, too.

92 ~ MARILYN MONROE

even an awkward stance with no display of impatience or discomfort. For Conover as for other cameramen, something fresh and lively in Norma Jeane seemed to spring to life just before the shutter clicked or the film rolled. It was as if she were flirting with the camera, connecting to anonymous admirers, offering herself as fully as she knew how, and winning new adorers, just as in her childhood dream. With the lens aimed at her, she was learning how to fix its glance on herself.

"There was a luminous quality to her face," Conover said years later, "a fragility combined with astonishing vibrancy." And he could not recall any other model so self-critical, nor one who so acutely scrutinized every contact sheet, every negative and print for the tiniest fault: "What happened to me here?" she asked repeatedly, or "This is awful, where did I go wrong?" Dissatisfied with anything less than perfection, she was in a way logically extending to the presentation of herself the Bolenders' injunctions to excellence and Grace's preparations for her to become a heroically famous star. Earnest, grave about her appearance, ready with detailed questions about the camera, lighting and the various types of film stock, Norma Jeane Dougherty wanted every image of herself to be brilliant. And alluring, too, for she also wore a sweater that was a size or two small for her ample proportions (36-24-34 as of August 1945), and tightened a pair of suspenders across a horizontal-striped shirt, the better to emphasize her firm breasts (which she also uplifted in a half-brassiere).

From June to midsummer 1945, David Conover continued to photograph Norma Jeane Dougherty in California, from Barstow to Riverside, from Death Valley to Bakersfield. Some of the results were used for army literature, some he gave to his model. By early autumn, two more major developments had occurred.

First, Ethel disapproved of her daughter-in-law's conduct: the girl, Mrs. Dougherty said, was simply idling around with young photographers like Conover. "Mom froze a bit when she began to figure my wife was throwing me a curve," Jim said later. Ethel complained that Norma Jeane's aspirations to be a professional model were inappropriate for a married woman, soon to be a mother when Jim returned from service. Mother Dougherty also disliked the girl's independent social life. A Hungarian actor named Eric Feldari escorted Norma Jeane to a Hollywood swim party that summer at the home of actor Robert Stack, who recalled her wearing "a white bathing suit, which she filled beauti-

JUNE 1942 - NOVEMBER 1945 ~ 93

fully. . . . I remember that she appeared to be shy and somehow on the outside of everything taking place at the party. I tried to be a good host, and every time I asked if she wanted anything, she said, 'No, everything is fine.' "

Eventually, Norma Jeane had a surfeit of Ethel's disapproving stares, and so she moved back to Nebraska Avenue, West Los Angeles, where she lived in the lower half of Ana Lower's duplex. From his mother, Jim must have received bulletins of his wife's new interests, for he wrote to Norma Jeane that "all this business of modeling is fine, but when I get out of the service we're going to have a family and you're going to settle down. You can only have one career, and a woman can't be two places at once." That season, her letters to Jim, formerly so frequent, ceased; she regarded the marriage as virtually dissolved, his temperament and expectations of her detrimental to her blossoming career and his attitude distasteful. "As far as I was concerned," she told friends a decade later,

this meant the marriage was in trouble. If you love someone, don't you want them to be happy? to do something they like and they're good at? All I wanted was to find out what I was. Jim thought he knew, and that I should've been satisfied. But I wasn't. That marriage was over long before the war ended.

In witness whereof, according to David Conover, she offered herself to him in a brief affair that blazed throughout that hot summer of 1945. His is the sole testimony for it, and since almost the whole of Conover's book consists of dialogue miraculously recalled (after three decades) in meticulous detail, it is difficult to accept at face value. This is made the more problematic by Conover's inaccurate chronology and the arch misrepresentation of Norma Jeane's voice in a tone of seduction: "Let's do what comes naturally," she whispers—and Conover coyly adds: "We did."

The second development occurred on August 2, 1945, when (at the suggestion of Conover and another photographer) Norma Jeane applied for acceptance to the Blue Book Agency. In Hollywood there were thousands of girls who wanted to be models, and as many models yearning to be movie stars. One of dozens of agencies founded to nurture such aspirations, the Blue Book was owned and strictly supervised

94 ~ MARILYN MONROE

by the formidable Emmeline Snively. She was a short, proper English-woman in her late forties who always wore a hat and, with her septuagenarian mother, Emma, as a frequent visitor, ran the business with a peculiar combination of suspicion and humor, white-glove propriety and a clear-eyed, sometimes cynical realism about the moral and financial perils of a model's life. With their Old World formalities unsuited to casual Los Angeles, Emma and Emmeline Snively were straight from the pages of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

From 1937 to 1943, Miss Snively had directed her so-called Village School in Westwood, which (as her catalogue testified) "specialized in training girls for photographic and fashion modeling." In January 1944, she moved to quarters in the Ambassador Hotel on Sunset Boulevard, where she expanded her operation and became the Blue Book Agency, a business that (in the words of her new brochure) "grooms girls for careers in motion pictures, photographic modeling and fashion modeling, [with] personalized instruction in charm and poise, success and beauty and personalized development"—exactly what Norma Jeane believed she required. At the time, there were about twenty models on Miss Snively's roster; according to Lydia Bodrero (later Reed), also at Blue Book during 1945 and 1946, many of them longed to become film stars because models were not well paid in Los Angeles. Post-Snively success meant graduation to a movie contract or moving to New York, where models were more handsomely paid.

And so from August through the autumn of 1945, the Blue Book had a new student-client. The receptionist's notes indicated Norma Jeane's height (five feet five), weight (118), measurements (36-24-34, size 12), hair color (medium blond: "too curly to manage, recommend bleach and permanent"), eyes (blue)—and "perfect teeth" (at least for modeling: they were a pleasing white, but she also had a slight overbite that later required correction). Norma Jeane paid a twenty-five-dollar fee for her picture to be included in the Blue Book catalogue, and said she could "dance a little and sing."

During the first few weeks, Norma Jeane was scrupulous in attending fashion modeling classes with Mrs. Gavin Beardsley, makeup and grooming with Maria Smith, and posing instructions with Miss Snively herself. The cost of the catalogue photo and the one-hundred-dollar fee for the courses were charged against an assignment obtained immediately for Norma Jeane. The Holga Steel Company had an industrial

JUNE 1942 - NOVEMBER 1945 ~ 95

show at the Pan-Pacific Auditorium that September, and Norma Jeane was paid a total of one hundred dollars to work as a hostess for ten days.

"I don't think that kid had ever been inside a first-class hotel before in her life," Snively said years later.

She kept glancing around at things, like it was a new world. . . . But I thought I could make her into something quite marketable in a short period of time. She was a clean-cut, American, wholesome girl—too plump, but beautiful in a way. We tried to teach her how to pose, how to handle her body. She always tried to lower her smile because she smiled too high, and it made her nose look a little long. At first she knew nothing about carriage, posture, walking, sitting or posing. She started out with less than any girl I ever knew, but she worked the hardest. . . . She wanted to learn, wanted to be somebody, more than anybody I ever saw before in my life.

After the industrial show, two days of posing for a Montgomery Ward clothing catalogue and four days at a Hollywood fashion show, it was clear that Norma Jeane's forte was not modeling clothes but rather appearing in glamour poses for advertisements: it was herself, not what she wore, that made the impression, that sold the goods. Later, she admitted the reason:

The problem, if you can call it that, was my figure. Miss Snively said nobody was paying attention to the clothes because my dresses or blouses or bathing suits were too tight. In other words, they were looking at me, and to hell with the clothes.

Snively sent Norma Jeane out to editors to pose for magazine covers and to photographers and advertising agencies. The results were immediate and stunning, and by spring 1946 Norma Jeane Dougherty (sometimes billed by Snively as "Jean Norman") had appeared on no less than thirty-three covers of magazines like *U.S. Camera*, *Parade*, *Glamorous Models*, *Personal Romances*, *Pageant*, *Laff*, *Peek* and *See*.

Her mentor caught the slightly fey aspect of Norma Jeane's personality—the girl who giggled easily, who took her work seriously but somehow gave the simultaneous impression that there was something vastly amusing about what she was doing.

"When you stop to think about it," she said years later,